

Senate Standing Committee on Environment and Communications

Answers to Senate Estimates Questions on Notice

Budget Estimates Hearings May 2014

Communications Portfolio

Special Broadcasting Service

Question No: 371

Program No. SBS

Hansard Ref: In writing

Topic: Legal Costs

Senator Ludwig asked:

List all legal costs incurred by the Department/Agency since 25 February 2014

1. List the total cost for these items, broken down by source of legal advice, hours retained or taken to prepare the advice and the level of counsel used in preparing the advice, whether the advice was internal or external
2. List cost spend briefing Counsel, broken down by hours spend briefing, whether it was direct or indirect briefing, the gender ratio of Counsel, how each Counsel was engaged (Departmental, Ministerial)
3. How was each piece of advice procured? Detail the method of identifying legal advice

Answer:

1. SBS's standard financial reporting is on a monthly basis (from beginning of the month to the end of the month). The closest SBS reporting period to Tuesday 25 February 2014 is from Monday 3 March 2014 (a difference of 4 working days). To provide the information outside SBS's standard financial reporting period would require an unreasonable diversion of resources.

For the period 3 March 2014 – 30 June 2014

Internal Legal Costs - \$440,652.00

External Legal Costs (Firms) - \$198,729.68

External Legal Costs (Counsel) - \$8,763.64

Advice from external law firms was prepared at various levels - Partner, Senior Executive Lawyer, Senior Lawyer, Senior Associate, Lawyer, Special Counsel, Counsel, Consultant & Law Graduate. To provide hours retained or taken to prepare advice would require an unreasonable diversion of resources.

2. \$8,763.64. Counsel was briefed through an external law firm. Gender ratio: One male and one female. SBS is unable to provide hours spent briefing as this information is commercial in confidence.
3. Written & verbal. General Counsel briefs external firms directly, having regard to their fields of expertise and experience in relation to the matter to hand. External law firms may brief Counsel, or Counsel may be briefed directly by General Counsel.